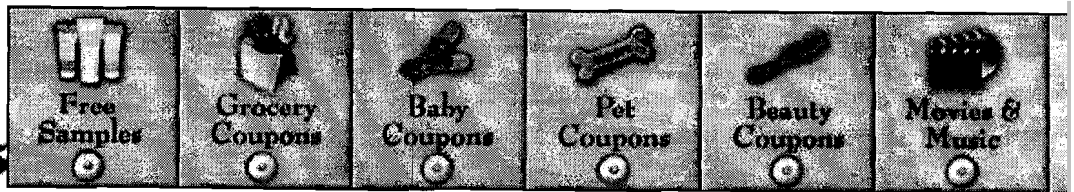


**Los Angeles Times**

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/crime/la-me-holton29dec29,1,3347123.story?coll=la-headlines-california-crime&ctrack=1&cset=true>  
*From the Los Angeles Times*

## Officers accused of abuse won't be charged

**L.A. County closes the criminal probe into alleged mistreatment of youths at the Karl Holton probation camp in San Fernando.**  
By Susannah Rosenblatt  
Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

December 29, 2007

Los Angeles County prosecutors announced Friday that they would not file charges against two probation officers who were accused of kicking, slapping and verbally abusing several teenagers serving time at a San Fernando Valley probation camp.

The decision brings to a close the criminal portion of an investigation into alleged abuses by a six officers and one supervisor at Camp Karl Holton in San Fernando, although the employees will likely face internal discipline.

L.A. County Probation Department officials had reassigned the six officers this spring after the allegations of mistreatment. The minors alleged that officers had struck them on the back of the head and legs, belittled them and threatened additional criminal sanctions against them, according to county Chief Probation Officer Robert Taylor.

He described the behavior as an "inappropriate use of power."

The county Sheriffs Department investigated the claims and issued its findings to prosecutors in August. Sheriffs investigators had identified three deputy probation officers whom they suspected of physically abusing three minors, one 15 and two 16, during two incidents in March.

The district attorney's review of the case included allegations by two teenage boys that officers grabbed one minor by the throat and held him to the ground and took another into a closed room where, out of view, he was punched. However, the review concluded that the evidence was insufficient to prosecute deputy probation officers Albert Banuelos and Shadfar Barkordar.

With respect to the alleged throat-grabbing incident, the report states, "There are no independent witnesses and there is no physical evidence that the alleged assault took place, or that if it did, it was not a reasonable use of force under the circumstances." The alleged punching incident was undermined by a witness' differing accounts and inconclusive video evidence, the report said.

"It is rare that we get cases from probation camps," said Sgt. Dan Scott of the Sheriffs Department's special victims unit.

Taylor said minors in county custody remain safe.

"We're there to provide treatment to these minors; we're not there to punish them," he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/crime/la-me-holton29dec29,1,2683901.print.story?coll=la-headlin...> 12/31/2007

One youth who had been locked up at Holton for about two months complained that officers seriously injured his arm even as he tried to comply with their commands.

"All I could do is try and take it until I couldn't take it no more," said a 17-year-old former Holton resident. The youth, whose name is not being published because he is a juvenile, described an incident one day last December when probation officers allegedly twisted his arm behind his back and smashed his face into a wall at the facility.

The juvenile, who was not one of the complainants in the district attorney's investigation, has since been released from county custody and agreed to talk to a Los Angeles Times reporter about his experiences at Holton.

An official Probation Department summary of the December incident describes the youth as being "very angry" and attempting to physically resist the officers, at which point they pushed him to the ground. But affidavits written by other Holton youths who witnessed the confrontation described the teen as following officers' instructions.

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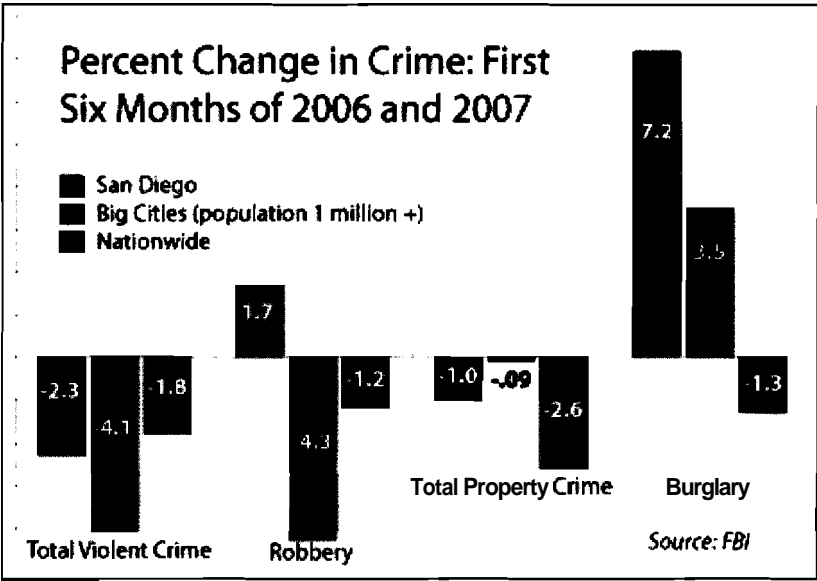
## SD's Crime Stats

Twice a year, the FBI releases a report called the Uniform Crime Report. The FBI has just made available the 2007 Preliminary Semiannual Uniform Crime Report, one of those two reports, and I just spent a while crunching a few numbers in Excel and comparing how San Diego has fared compared to the rest of the country and other big cities.

The report covers crime statistics from the first six months of 2007 and compares them to the first six months of 2006. It's important to remember that the report covers the number of crimes that are reported to police departments, which has been criticized as an inefficient way of measuring the number of overall crimes being committed.

Nationwide, the big figures were that the overall number of violent crimes reported decreased by 1.8 percent. In San Diego, the number of violent crimes reported in the first six months of 2007 decreased more than the national average -- it was down 2.3 percent from the year before.

But San Diego didn't do as well as other large cities. On average, American cities of more than 1 million people saw the number of violent crimes reported drop 4.1 percent, almost twice the drop seen in San Diego.



The number of property crimes reported nationwide in the first six months of 2007 decreased 2.6 percent from the year before. In San Diego, the number of property crimes reported dropped less sharply, by 1 percent, better than the 0.09 percent drop seen on average in big cities.

San Diego saw an increase in robberies reported in the first six months of 2007. The number of robberies reported rose 1.7 percent from 2006. By comparison, the average number of robberies reported in big cities dropped 4.3 percent. Nationwide, the number of robberies reported dropped 1.2 percent.

The only other reported crime that increased in San Diego in the first six months of 2007 was burglary, which increased 7.2 percent last year. That was more than twice the increase seen on average in big cities. Nationwide, the number of burglaries reported dropped 1.3 percent.

The full report can be read here.

-- WILL CARLESS

More Metro news

## Police laud added power of new PepperBall gun

'Less-lethal' weapon used in Nov. arrest

**By Mark Arner**  
UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

January 15, 2008

**NATIONAL CITY** – The small, busy National City Police Department was the first in the nation to use a new, more powerful PepperBall weapon to help keep the peace in 2007.

The weapon, which delivers twice the punch of previous models, worked like a charm Nov. 21 during the arrest of a suspected car thief, officials said.

A 27-year-old documented gang member had jumped from a stolen car after a high-speed chase. He surrendered after a round was fired at him on East Seventh Street, just east of Interstate 805, said National City police Sgt. Mike Harlan.

The SA-4 PepperBall system was publicly unveiled in July. It has been sold to more than 100 law enforcement agencies nationwide, including the southwest division of the U.S. Border Patrol in San Diego and the New York City Police Department, said Chris Andrews, marketing director for the San Diego-based PepperBall Technologies Inc.

The red-and-black weapon looks like a fat, stubby handgun and is classified among several "less-lethal" alternatives to conventional firearms. It is also lighter and smaller than the 3-foot-long rifles that the PepperBall firm has sold worldwide for a decade.

Each of the weapons sells for less \$400, Andrews said. A magazine with four pepper projectiles costs about \$25.

Harlan and Officer Bill Phillips, a firearms instructor for the department's 91 sworn officers, praised the weapon after a demonstration at police headquarters last week.

"It's going to save lives," Harlan said.

Because the SA-4 PepperBall launcher is much smaller than earlier models, it is more likely to be carried by officers and used in the often unpredictable situations when an officer might need to reach for a weapon, Harlan said.

When people are struck with the SA-4 launcher's projectile, they feel an impact similar to being hit with a baseball bat, Andrews said. It also releases 3 grams of a hot pepper powder that spreads into roughly a 100-foot area, he said.

"It's gonna hurt," Andrews said. "And the pepper powder is going to cause closing of the eyes and tearing, and coughing and burning of the lungs."

On Nov. 21, Cpl. Jeff Meeks fired the SA-4 PepperBall launcher at the fleeing suspected car thief instead of releasing a police dog, because there were several people nearby, police said.

<http://signonsandiego.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=SignOnSanDiego.com+%3E+N...> 1/15/2008



PepperBall Technologies  
The small, busy National City Police Department was the first in the nation to use a new, more powerful PepperBall weapon to help keep the peace in 2007.

"A new PepperBall weapon was deployed and the suspect went to the ground and was arrested," a report by Sgt. Greg Seward states. "There were no injuries and no damage to any vehicles."

PepperBall literature warns that the SA-4 launcher may not work on heavily clothed or padded people.

Andrews said no deaths or serious injuries have been caused by the more than 10 million PepperBall rounds that have been fired during the past decade.

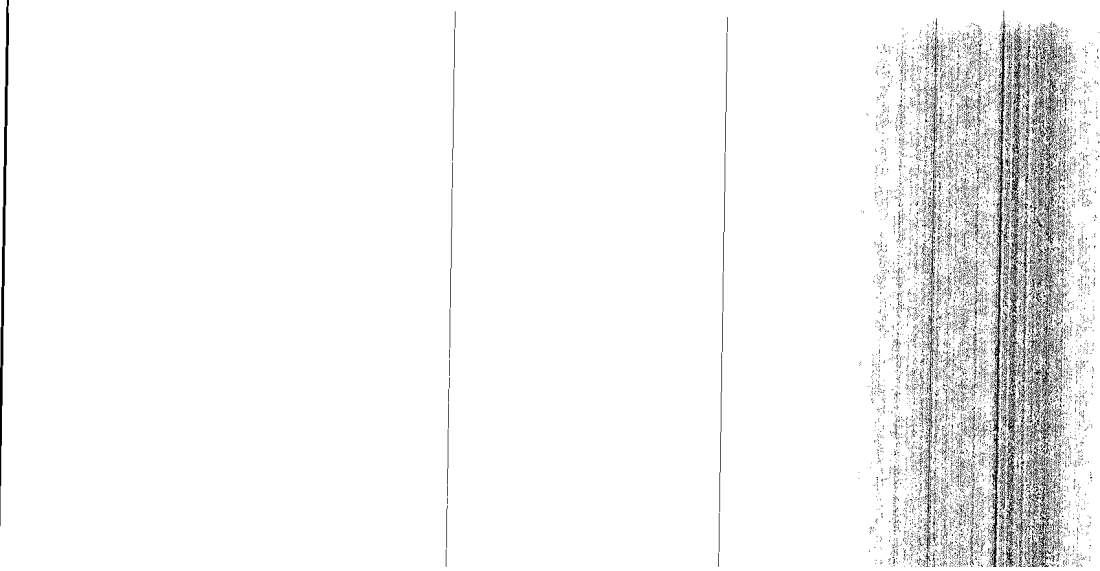
"We're not for every situation," he said. "But it's an extremely effective tool to bring suspects into custody."



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*From the Los Angeles Times*

## O.C. sheriffs resignation causes turmoil

In leaving to focus on his federal indictment, Carona fires his assistant sheriff and leaves the choice of his successor in question. **VIDEO | DISCUSS**  
By Christine Hanley, Stuart Pfeifer and Christian Berthelsen  
Los Angeles Times Staff Writers

January 15, 2008

Orange County Sheriff Michael S. Carona's announcement Monday that he was quitting his post to fight public corruption charges left the state's second-largest sheriffs department in upheaval.

As he departed, Carona took steps to leave his political imprint on the department, firing one of his assistant sheriffs, Dan Martini, without explanation, and appointing as interim sheriff one of his biggest loyalists.

His choice of Assistant Sheriff Jack Anderson to run the department immediately raised concerns in some quarters, because in addition to being a strong Carona ally, Anderson is an official of the Orange County Republican Party.

Supervisor John Moorlach questioned whether the appointment was even valid. The Board of Supervisors intends to appoint a successor to fill out the remaining three years of Carona's term, and already the names of candidates -- some from the Carona faithful, others sharp critics of the sheriff -- are being discussed. The board meets today.

Carona said he resigned so he could concentrate on defending himself against corruption charges and continue receiving free legal advice from one of the nation's top law firms.

The decision, which marked a significant reversal of Carona's vow to stay in office while he worked to clear his name, brought an end to a once-promising political career.

Carona, who called the resignation "one of the most difficult decisions I have ever made," stepped down a little more than two months after federal prosecutors accused him of selling the power of his office for tens of thousands of dollars in cash and gifts.

"The downside is once I go to trial and get found not guilty, I can't get this job back," Carona said. "I need to have a top-notch legal defense team, and these are some of the best of the best in America. It's an incredible opportunity for me."

Carona's longtime political advisor and attorney, Michael Schroeder, said Carona's resignation was in no way an indication that the three-term sheriff intended to plead guilty and that "no new evidence has popped up" to prompt him to step down. The sheriff, who was charged along with his wife, Deborah, and alleged longtime mistress, Debra Hoffman, is scheduled to stand trial in June. There are no plea negotiations underway, Schroeder said.

"He's not going to accept a result other than the feds' dismissing the charges," Schroeder said.

Carona's career had seen a second-generation American, the son of a car mechanic, rise to national prominence as the leader of California's second-largest sheriffs department. As photographs outside his hallway attest, Carona has worked with three governors and two presidents and has appeared as a guest on CNN's "Larry King Live." Several years ago, he considered running for statewide office, then perhaps a seat in Washington.

"It's the American dream, and I've had the chance to live it," a somber Carona said during a brief discussion with The Times. "It's very difficult. For 32 years, this has been what I've done. I've been a peace officer in Orange County. . . . This is not the way I planned on walking out of here, but this is the way I find myself walking out."

Before federal prosecutors charged Carona with seven felonies in October, there had been allegations of cronyism and sexual harassment.

At the same time, Carona had proved himself a charismatic and effective leader, promoting the Amber Alert system that, in California, started in Orange County; installing drug abuse treatment at county jails; and expanding one of the largest crime labs and DNA centers in the nation.

The unraveling of Carona's career follows federal prosecutions of two of his top assistants, former Undersheriff George Jararnillo and Assistant Sheriff Donald Haidl. Both men, once Carona's biggest allies, are expected to testify against Carona.

Although professing his innocence and confidence that he would clear his name at trial, Carona said he had no choice but to resign in order to obtain the best legal defense available.

At issue were the donated legal services of the Jones Day law firm in Los Angeles. The state attorney general's office opened an investigation into Carona's arrangement with Jones Day at the request of Shirley L. Grindle, an Orange County political watchdog who thought the arrangement violated state law.

Senior Assistant Atty. Gen. Gary W. Schons said his office had informed Jones Day attorney Brian A. Sun that it had determined that the free legal service constituted a gift and that Carona could resign or arrange to pay for the legal services at a reasonable rate.

With the estimated cost of the defense at \$2 million, Carona chose to resign and accept the help rather than stay in office and hire cheaper attorneys or accept a public defender.

"He's a man of modest means," Schroeder said of Carona. He said the legal bills Carona had amassed thus far already exceed his net worth. Carona has several attorneys on his team, not all of whom are working pro bono.

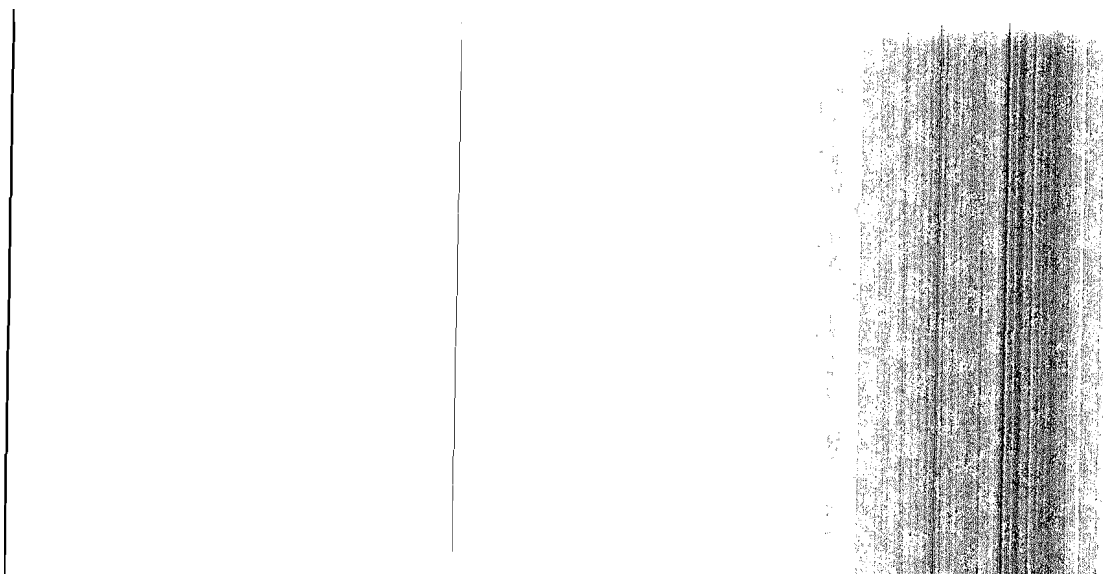
County supervisors, who have already been meeting behind closed doors with potential successors, will appoint a sheriff to serve the three years left in Carona's term. There will be no special election.

While praising Anderson's career with the department, Moorlach said the board was not certain he could legally be named interim sheriff. The shuffling of the top ranks on the last day of Carona's service, he said, made it unclear who the proper successor was according to state law. He also said the county was examining Carona's midnight firing of Assistant Sheriff Martini.

Martini said he and Carona had had their differences but that they were not a factor in Carona's decision. When he was told his services were no longer required, he chose to resign, he said. Martini, 59, had been with the department 32 years. He said that in the end there was no bad blood between him and Carona. Carona also demoted Undersheriff Jo Ann Galisky to assistant sheriff. Carona said Galisky declined his invitation to serve as interim sheriff. Galisky declined to comment.

Highlighting the chaotic nature of the hand-over, Moorlach said Carona didn't communicate with the board about

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/orange/la-me-carona15jan15,1,6960989,print.story?coll=la-utilities-...> 1/23/2008



whom he wished to have succeed him.

Moorlach, who was the first to call for Carona's resignation when he was indicted, said: "For the last few months, the sheriff has not really been communicating with us at all."

He said the county wanted a "deliberative, thorough" search for a successor that could take up to six months. "We need someone who can lead the department and restore morale," Moorlach said.

Already, at least four candidates have lobbied the supervisors for the job -- former Lt. Bill Hunt, Los Angeles County Sheriffs Cmdr. Ralph Martin, Santa Ana Police Chief Paul Walters and a top official of the Anaheim Police Department. Hunt, Martin and Walters have all previously mounted unsuccessful campaigns for sheriff against Carona.

Mark Nichols, general manager of the Assn. of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs, the union that represents nearly 2,000 sworn personnel, said the prosecution had been a distraction for the department. Likewise, Orange County Dist. Atty. Tony Rackauckas said Carona's retirement "is good news for both him and the county."

One week after he was indicted, Carona announced that he was taking a paid, two-month leave to work on his defense. He returned to work Jan. 7 and spent one week on the job before deciding to resign.

Carona will receive a pension roughly equal to his final salary of \$1 99,680 per year.

Prosecutors allege that Carona tried to enrich himself, his wife and his mistress by trading favors for cash and gifts. Carona faces conspiracy, mail fraud and witness-tampering charges; his wife is charged with one count of conspiracy; and Hoffman with one count of conspiracy, four counts of mail fraud and three counts of bankruptcy fraud.

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Times staff writer H.G. Reza contributed to this report.

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(Press release)

January 22 2008  
Product News

**TASER Announces Second Wrongful Death Lawsuit Dismissal within a Week**

TASER International has announced the dismissal with prejudice of the wrongful death product liability lawsuit filed against TASER International in the case of Tolosko-Parker v. TASER International, Inc., et al. filed in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California.

"We are very pleased that the plaintiffs agreed to voluntary dismiss TASER International with prejudice from this litigation," said Doug Klint, vice President and general counsel of TASER International. "The driving force behind this recent trend of voluntary dismissals is the extensive and overwhelming medical and scientific evidence confirming the general safety of TASER technology. Our policy is not to settle suspect injury or death cases and no moneys were paid for this dismissal. We will continue to aggressively defend any litigation filed against TASER International and pursue sanctions and costs against plaintiffs for frivolous litigation," concluded Klint.

This lawsuit dismissal represents the sixty third (63rd) wrongful death or injury lawsuits that have been dismissed or judgment entered in favor of TASER International. This number includes a small number of police officer training injury lawsuits that were settled and dismissed in cases where the settlement economics to TASER International were significantly less than the cost of litigation. TASER International has not lost any product liability lawsuit.

